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ABSTRACT

A special survey on employer child-care practices conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in the summer of 1987 sampled 10,345 establishments with 10 or more employees selected from the BLS establishment universe file and classified by industry and size. The survey showed that over the last decade, the number of mothers in the labor force has grown by nearly 40 percent; for these women, obtaining reliable, high quality care for their children at reasonable cost is often a major problem. Approximately 11 percent of establishments with 10 or more employees offered some benefits to help them with their child-care arrangements. In addition, about 61 percent of establishments had the kinds of policies on flexible work schedules or leave that could help employees handle child-care arrangements even though these policies may not have been designed with that purpose in mind. About 2 percent of establishments provided day-care facilities, one-third of which were day-care facilities. Large firms and government agencies were more likely to provide these types of benefits than small businesses. Some establishments made other types of arrangements such as flexible time, flexible leave, part-time work, and job sharing. (KC)

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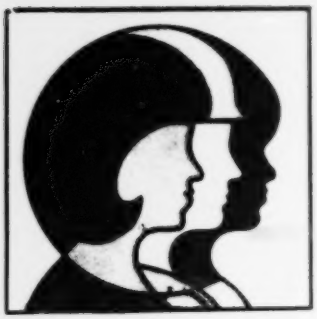

Employment in Perspective: Women in the Labor Force

First Quarter 1988

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Report 752

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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This report presents a summary of a special survey on employer child-care practices conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the summer of 1987.[1]

Over the last decade, the number of mothers in the labor force has grown by nearly 40 percent. For these women, obtaining reliable, quality care for their children at reasonable cost is often a major problem. Employers, too, are increasingly finding themselves affected by the unsolved child-care problems of their workers. Such problems may lead to absenteeism, tardiness, increased turnover, and decreases in morale and productivity. As a result, some employers have instituted policies to aid those workers who are parents in meeting their child-care responsibilities. The purpose of the survey was to measure the extent of this activity.

Data obtained from the special survey show that about 11 percent of establishments with 10 or more employees offered their employees some benefits to help them with their child-care arrangements. In addition, about 61 percent of establishments had the kinds of policies on flexible work schedules or leave that could help employees handle child-care arrangements even though these policies may not have been designed with that purpose in mind.

Table A shows the distribution of establishments according to their child-care benefits or work schedule and leave policies. About 2 percent of establishments provided day-care facilities (either on site or through a consortium), one-third of which were day care businesses. Another 3 percent of establishments, while not providing facilities, assisted with child-care expenses. More common benefits were information, referral, and counseling services, which were provided by about 10 percent of the establishments, including 9 percent of private firms and 34 percent of government agencies. Large firms were more likely to provide these types of benefits than small ones.

Some employers, however, made other accommodations to help with child-care problems. Among these, flexitime and flexible leave were the most common. Both were being provided by about 43 percent of the establishments. Next, at 35 percent, were voluntary part-time work schedules, followed by job sharing (where more than one person fills a full-time slot). Such policies were generally somewhat more common among establishments in private industry—especially small establishments and those in the service-producing sector—than in government.

Table A. Establishments with 10 employees or more by type of child-care benefits and work schedule policies aiding child care, summer 1987

Child-care benefits and work-schedule and leave policies	Total	Industry sector	
		Private	Government
Total establishments (in thousands)	1,202	1,128	74
Percent providing benefits	11.1	10.1	26.4
Day care	2.1	1.6	9.4
Financial assistance	3.1	3.1	2.9
Information and referral	5.1	4.3	15.8
Counseling services	5.1	4.2	18.2
Other child-care benefits	1.0	.9	2.3
Percent with favorable work-schedule or leave policies	61.2	61.4	57.2
Flexitime	43.2	43.6	37.5
Voluntary part time	34.8	35.3	26.7
Job sharing	15.5	15.0	23.5
Work at home	8.3	8.5	4.0
Flexible leave	42.9	42.9	43.7
Other work-schedule policies	2.1	1.8	7.1
Percent with no benefits or policies aiding child care	36.8	36.6	39.6

[1] The sample consisted of 10,345 establishments with 10 or more employees selected from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' establishment universe file and classified by industry and size. Initial results and a short technical note were published in "BLS Reports on Employer Child-Care Practices," News Release, USDL 88-7, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Additional information on this survey will be provided in a forthcoming article in the *Monthly Labor Review*.

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Summary indicators on women in the labor force

(Data are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise indicated; numbers are in thousands.)

Indicator	1987				1988
	I	II	III	IV	I
1. *Population and labor force*					
Women, 16 years and over:					
Civilian noninstitutional population[1]	95,484	95,736	95,983	96,211	96,447
Civilian labor force	53,119	53,516	53,831	54,156	54,477
2. *Civilian labor force participation rates*					
Women, 16 years and over	55.6	55.9	56.1	56.3	56.5
16 to 19 years	52.6	53.2	53.6	53.8	53.6
20 years and over	55.9	56.1	56.3	56.5	56.7
20 to 24 years	73.4	73.1	73.0	72.6	73.6
25 to 54 years	71.3	71.8	72.1	72.2	72.3
55 years and over	21.8	21.8	22.0	22.3	22.3
White	55.3	55.7	55.8	55.9	56.2
Black	57.4	57.2	58.2	59.0	58.2
3. *Employment status*					
Women, 16 years and over:					
Employed	49,622	50,221	50,567	50,918	51,338
Unemployed	3,497	3,295	3,263	3,239	3,138
16 to 19 years:					
Employed	3,170	3,262	3,312	3,296	3,300
Unemployed	641	606	593	623	596
20 years and over:					
Employed	46,452	46,959	47,255	47,621	48,038
Unemployed	2,856	2,689	2,671	2,615	2,542
20 to 24 years:					
Employed	6,520	6,473	6,454	6,414	6,450
Unemployed	739	700	661	594	607
25 to 54 years:					
Employed	33,986	34,555	34,875	35,118	35,431
Unemployed	1,947	1,811	1,822	1,813	1,766
55 years and over:					
Employed	5,916	5,926	5,982	6,069	6,105
Unemployed	173	179	186	201	170
4. *Unemployment rates*					
Women, 16 years and over	6.6	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.8
16 to 19 years	16.8	15.7	15.2	15.9	15.3
20 years and over	5.8	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.0
20 to 24 years	10.2	9.8	9.3	8.5	8.6
25 to 54 years	5.4	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.7
55 years and over	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.2	2.7
White, 16 years and over	5.5	5.2	5.1	5.0	4.8
White, 16 to 19 years	13.9	13.2	13.1	13.1	12.9
Black, 16 years and over	14.4	13.1	12.7	12.6	12.4
Black, 16 to 19 years	39.3	36.1	30.0	34.8	34.8
5. *Full-time workers*					
Percent of employed women working full time	73.8	73.8	74.1	74.0	74.2
Percent of unemployed women looking for full-time work	74.0	74.7	73.8	73.3	73.8

See footnotes at end of table.

Summary indicators on women in the labor force—Continued

(Data are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise indicated, numbers are in thousands.)

Indicator	1987				1988
	I	II	III	IV	I
6. *Duration of unemployment* [1]					
Average (mean) number of weeks unemployed women have been looking for work	12.6	12.0	11.0	11.8	12.0
7. *Marital status*					
Married women, husband present:					
Civilian noninstitutional population	52,457	52,539	52,547	52,584	52,644
Civilian labor force participation rate	55.7	56.1	56.0	56.0	56.7
Unemployment rate	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1
Women who maintain families:					
Civilian noninstitutional population	10,687	10,692	10,808	10,847	10,915
Civilian labor force participation rate	61.6	61.8	62.0	62.7	61.5
Unemployment rate	9.7	9.5	9.1	8.6	8.2

[1] Not seasonally adjusted.

NOTE: Due to rounding and independent seasonal adjustment, some components may not add to totals.

Technical Note

Data in this table are from the Current Population Survey, a national sample survey of 59,500 households. The information obtained from this survey relates to the employment status of persons 16 years old and over in the civilian noninstitutional population. Seasonally adjusted data for the 5 most recent years are subject to revision at the end of each year, based on recomputation of the seasonal factors to reflect an additional year of experience. For a detailed explanation of the Current Population Survey, including sampling reliability and more complete definitions than those below, see *Employment and Earnings*, published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Brief definitions

The *civilian labor force* comprises all persons classified as employed or unemployed.

The *civilian employed* are all persons who during the survey week: (a) Did any work at all as paid civilians; (b) worked in their own business or profession or on their own farm; (c) worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family business; or (d) were temporarily absent from their jobs due to illness, vacation, bad weather, etc.

Unemployed persons are those who had no employment during the survey week, were available for work at that time, and made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the prior 4 weeks. Persons laid off from their former jobs and awaiting recall and those expecting to report to a job within 30 days need not be looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

Not in the civilian labor force are all persons not classified as employed or unemployed.

The *civilian labor force participation rate* is the civilian labor force as percent of the civilian noninstitutional population.

The *civilian workers unemployment rate* is the unemployed as a percent of the civilian labor force.

Full-time workers are those who usually work 35 hours or more per week. *Part-time workers* are those who usually work 1 to 34 hours per week.

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